

## LAND PURCHASE SCAM RU replies to UGC letter, comes up with new figures

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The Rajshahi University authorities yesterday replied to the letter of the University Grants Commission (UGC) that sought explanation from RU regarding the allegations of corruption and irregularities in the Tk 14-crore procurement of a land with high-rise building for the institute's guesthouse in Dhaka.

RU Registrar Prof Entajul Haque said, "In reply, we sent them (UGC) the same statement we gave the journalists [on Monday]."

Earlier on Sunday, Dr Ferdous Zaman, additional director of public university management department of the UGC, in a letter asked the RU registrar to explain the issue within seven days. The Daily Star obtained a copy of the letter.

The statement -- signed by RU Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan -- sent to journalists on Monday, came up with new facts and figures, dissimilar with those approved by the syndicate earlier.

The statement now claims the RU authorities did not purchase any land individually, they bought a building along with its land. They gave a break-up of the total expenditure showing a new value of the seven-storey building was Tk 10.88 crore. The rest 2.37 crore was being spent on the building's registration, ownership transfer fees and boundary wall construction.

But the Hatirpool land deed shows it was bought at Tk 3.50 crore on October 20, 2016 and the university's syndicate on November 29, 2016 approved that they bought the land at Tk 11 crore and they were constructing a seven-storey building at Tk 2.25 crore on the land.

## RU replies

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Moreover, the RU statement claimed they followed direct procurement method (DPM) as their initiative for the procurement in open tender method (OTM) became unsuccessful for twice.

A government procurement expert said the procurement of land and building did not fall under the conditions of DPM that are only followed in the cases of monopoly of the product.

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